

The Bank of England.

When the Bank of England commenced business in 1694, with a staff of fifty-four clerks, all of whom worked in a single room and the directors with them, no one imagined that it would develop into the great national institution it is today. And its career, extending over two centuries, has brought it in touch with a wealth of romance, relics of which may be found in that department of the bank with which the public is least familiar—namely, its museum.

How many people know that the bank once issued a note for a penny?—although it should be explained that this was entirely due to an error. But the penny note went into circulation all the same, and only by offering a reward of £5 was the bank able to get it back again before it passed into the hands of the curio collector. This note is still preserved in one of the albums, and in another are some of the curious notes which saved the bank in 1745. In that year a great run on the funds took place—so great, in fact, that it was thought that the bank would be unable to meet it; but the directors in the nick of time sent a number of their clerks into the crowd to present notes which were paid in sixpences, thus giving the off-

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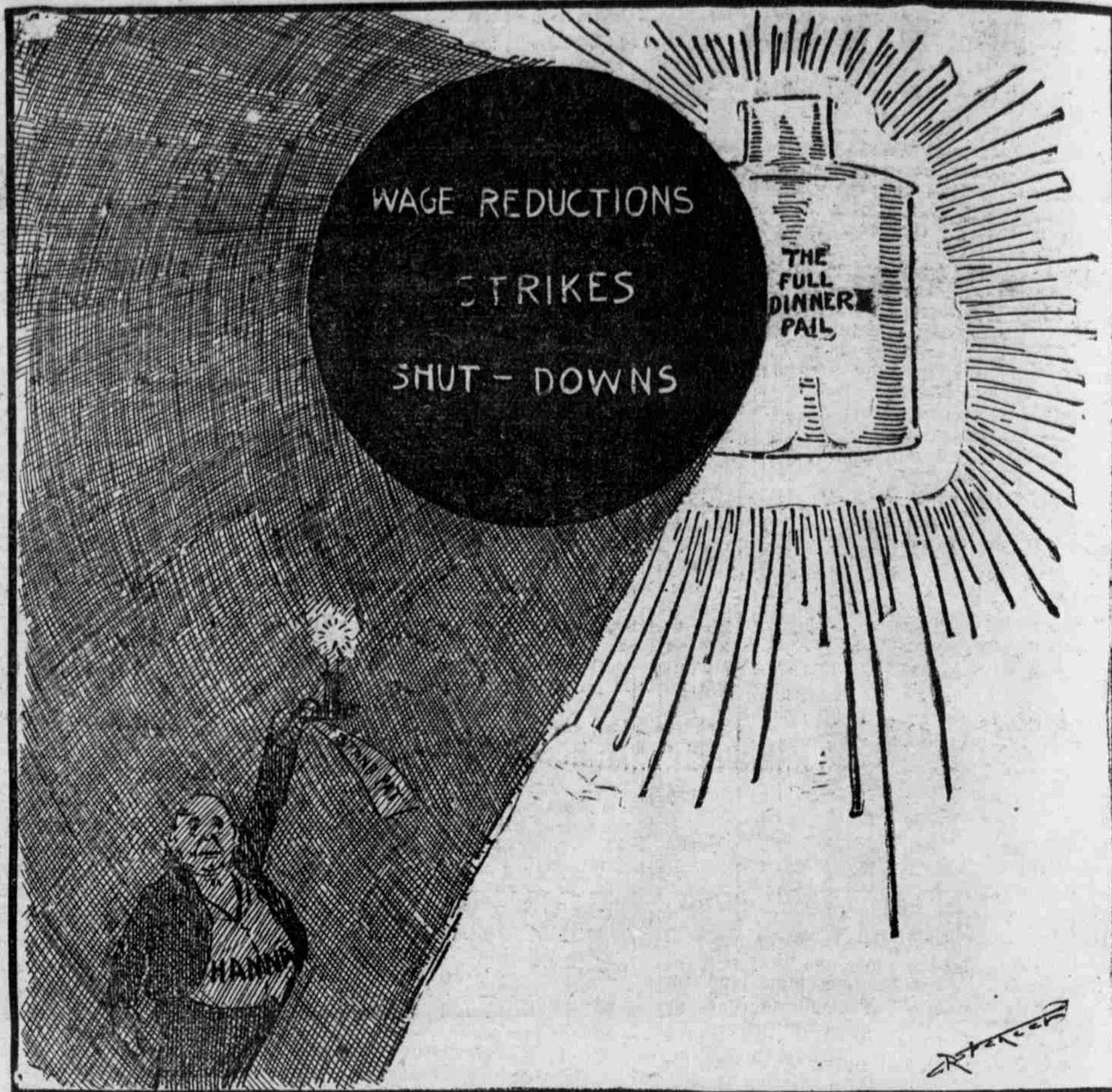
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The Coming Eclipse.

cial time to prepare for the demand for specie.

Another curiosity is a note for £1,000,000, which is the only one of that value ever printed; while there is also a note which was in circulation for nearly 150 years before it was presented.

Specimens of all the forged notes which have been uttered from time to time by the unscrupulous are kept, and their value aggregates several million pounds, while notes brought from the wreck of the Eurydice and one taken from the stomach of an enormous codfish captured off the coast of Greenland are among the bank's most valued treasures.

There are hundreds of specimens of curious coins which have been returned to the bank from all parts of the world, or found in the testing machine. This machine, by the way, tests 35,000 sovereigns a day, and automatically rejects any which have become light.

The museum library contains all the old ledgers which have been used by the bank since it was first opened, and they number 70,000, while another set of volumes gives a record of every member of the staff who has ever served at the bank. There are also 23,000 volumes of all kinds for the use of the staff, some of which are so rare that the same number of sovereigns would not purchase the collection.

The bank has its own churchyard adjoining, and here many of the officials have in former times been buried. In one corner is the grave of a man who stood 8 feet 2 inches in his socks.—Tit-Bits.

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